

Shri Satyanaaraayana Story

Chapter 1

Shaunaka and eighty eight thousand other rishis assembled at the forest of Naimishaaranya and asked Mahaarishi Soota, the narrator of the Puraana, “Oh Mahaarishi, please tell us how mankind can attain salvation.” Mahaarishi Soota answered, “Even Naarada Muni had asked Lord Vishnu, the consort of Lakshmi, the same question! Let me repeat what Lord Vishnu told Naarada. Please listen carefully.”

“Naarada, during one of his regular journeys to various worlds, came to the earth. There he saw people suffering as a result of their past deeds. To remove their suffering and offer salvation, Naarada traveled to Vishnu Loka and found Lord Vishnu adorned with conch, chakra, gadaa, and lotus in his four hands, and a garland around his neck. Naarada spoke humbly, “Oh Supreme Lord, the saviour of the destitute and the troubled, I surrender at thy feet.” Lord Vishnu greeted him and asked, “Tell me what you want, and I will fulfill your wishes.” Naarada replied, “Oh Bhagawaan, people on earth are suffering in many ways as a result of their past sinful deeds. Please bestow thy grace and reveal to me as to how they can be helped.” Lord Vishnu replied, “Mankind can rid itself of all its sorrows by performing a puja called *Satyanaaraayana Poojaa*. This Poojaa, when performed according to religious rites, will bring happiness, peace of mind and wealth in this life, and salvation beyond.” On hearing this, Naarada was filled with joy, and addressed Lord Vishnu, “Oh Lord, in your infinite grace, please tell me the details of the puja you have mentioned, how and when to perform it and who has performed it before.”

Lord Vishnu answered, “This Poojaa can be performed on a full moon day. One must invite his friends and relatives, and perform the Poojaa with devotion offering fruits, ghee, milk, curd, butter, wheat flour, sugar and honey to God. After the Poojaa is completed, he must read the story of Lord Satyanaaraayana, and then distribute prasaadam to everyone. The Poojaa thus performed, will bring fulfillment of one’s wishes. Particularly, in the Kaliyuga, this Poojaa can bring contentment.”

Chapter 2

Mahaarishi Soota continued addressing the assembled rishis “Oh rishis, I will now tell you who have all observed the Satyanaaraayana Vratha in the past.”

“Once there lived a very poor brahmin in the beautiful city of Kashi. Plagued by acute hunger, he used to wander about in search of food. Lord Vishnu took the form of an old man, appeared before the poor brahmin, and asked, “Friend, why are you wandering aimlessly?” The brahmin replied, “Sir, I am a very poor man. Unable to bear the pangs of hunger, I beg for alms. Sir, if you know a way out of this misery, please tell me.” Lord Vishnu, who was in the guise of an old man, replied, “Oh brahmin, Lord Satyanaaraayana grants the wishes of all his devotees, and removes their sorrows. So, you should perform His Poojaa, and reap its benefits.” Lord Vishnu then explained the details of the Satyanaaraayana Vratha to the brahmin, and disappeared.

The poor brahmin resolved to perform the Poojaa. After a sleepless night, he got up early in the morning and went to beg for alms, his mind fixed on only one thing, namely – the Poojaa. That day he

got a lot of money with which he bought fruits and milk, curd and honey, and performed the Poojaa with his friends and relatives. With Lord Satyanaaraayana's grace he shed his poverty, and lived a contented life. Every month on the full moon day, he performed the Poojaa, and finally attained Moksha (salvation)."

Mahaarishi Soota continued, "One day when this brahmin from Kashi was observing Satyanaaraayana Vratha, a woodcutter entered his house and asked for water. Seeing the brahmin perform the Poojaa, the woodcutter inquired about the Poojaa. The brahmin, who had been bestowed with Lord Vishnu's grace, spoke, "This is Satyanaaraayana Vratha. One who observes the Vratha will be blessed by the Lord. I myself have been bestowed with wealth." The woodcutter was delighted to hear this. He learned the proper way to perform the Poojaa, ate the prasada that was offered, and went his way.

With Lord Satyanaaraayana in his mind, the woodcutter resolved that he would observe the Vratha with whatever he was going to earn that by selling firewood that day. He went to that part of the city where rich people lived, sold the firewood, and made twice the normal profit. Pleased with his luck the woodcutter bought bananas, sugar, ghee, milk, curd, honey and wheat flour, and performed the Satyanaaraayana Poojaa with his friends and relatives. By Lord Satyanaaraayana's grace he too acquired enough wealth, lived comfortably, and finally attained Moksha."

Chapter 3

Mahaarishi Soota continued, "Oh best of ascetics, I will now tell you the story further. In the olden days there lived a wise king by the name of Ulkaamukha. He had mastered all his senses and always spoke the truth. He used to go to the temple every day, and offer gifts to the brahmins. His lotus-faced wife was a pure and pious woman. One day, the royal couple was performing Satyanaaraayana Poojaa at the banks of the river Bhadrashheelaa. At that time, a merchant called Saadhu sailed by. Seeing the king perform some Poojaa, Saadhu stopped his boat, got off, and addressed the king humbly, "Oh King, would you kindly tell me what you are doing with such devotion and concentration?" The king replied, "Oh Saadhu, I have no children. In order that I may be blessed with children, I am worshipping the Lord Almighty Satyanaaraayana."

On hearing this, Saadhu spoke humbly, "Oh King, please tell me how to perform the Poojaa. I would like to observe the Vratha as I too have no children." The king told him all the details. Saadhu returned home, and with great joy, told his wife that they should perform Satyanaaraayana Poojaa which will fulfill their desire to have children. He then resolved to perform the Poojaa after the child was born. By the divine grace, Saadhu's wife, Leelaavati, soon conceived and, in due course, gave birth to a beautiful girl who was named Kalaavati.

One day, Leelaavati reminded her husband of his promise to perform Satyanaaraayana Poojaa. Saadhu told his wife that he would do the Poojaa at the time of his daughter's wedding, and got busy with his work.

In the meantime, Kalaavati grew up and blossomed into a lovely girl. Saadhu sent out messengers to find a suitable bridegroom for his daughter.

One of the messengers found a good natured and handsome boy in a Vaishya family from Kanchan Nagar. Saadhu found the boy to be a suitable match for his daughter, and celebrated her marriage with great pomp and show. But, Saadhu completely forgot about the Satyanaaraayana Poojaa, and the Lord placed a curse on Saadhu.

The, one day Saadhu went on a business trip with his son-in-law. He stopped to trade at Ratnapur which was ruled by King Chandraketu. During the time he was in Ratnapur, some thieves robbed the king's treasury, and were running away. The king's soldiers followed them in hot pursuit. The frightened thieves threw all the things they had robbed near Saadhu and his son-in-law, and escaped. Finding the things of king's treasures near Saadhu and his son-in-law the king's soldiers thought that they were the thieves, arrested them and brought them before the king. The king ordered them to be chained, and thrown into prison. Because of Lord's Maayaa, nobody even listened to what Saadhu had to say in his defense. King Chandraketu also confiscated all their merchandise.

Lord Satyanaaraayana's curse did not spare even Saadhu's wife. Some robbers broke into her house, and Leelaavati lost everything.

One day, Kalaavati was very hungry and went out of the house. She wandered here and there and stopped at a house where Satyanaaraayana Poojaa was being performed. She stayed at that place until the Poojaa was finished and ate the prasaad that was offered. When she reached home, it was very late in the night. Leelaavati asked her where she had been. Kalaavati told her mother that she was listening to Satyanaaraayana Kathaa in somebody's house. Leelaavati at once remembered her husband's promise to perform the Poojaa, and resolved to observe the Satyanaaraayana Vratha herself. She collected all her relatives and friends, prayed to Lord Satyanaaraayana to forgive their sins.

Lord Satyanaaraayana was pleased with Leelaavati's prayers. He appeared before King Chandraketu in his dreams, and told him to release the two merchants from prison as they were not the real thieves. If the king failed to do so, Lord Satyanaaraayana warned that his kingdom, wealth and children would all disappear.

Next morning, the king told his counselors about his dream, and ordered Saadhu and his son-in-law to be released, and brought before him. The latter were frightened, and stood before the king with bowed heads. The king talked to them gently and said, "You two have suffered greatly because of your fate, but now there is nothing to fear." The king returned their merchandise, gave them new clothes and gifts, and bade them goodbye.

Chapter 4

Saadhu and his son-in-law loaded their boat with the riches given to them by the king and sailed homewards. Lord Satyanaaraayana wanted to test Saadhu further. He took the form of an ascetic with a trident, appeared before Saadhu, and asked them him what he was carrying in his boat. Without realizing that the ascetic was Lord Satyanaaraayana in disguise, Saadhu laughed mockingly, and said, "You brahmin, were you thinking of stealing my things? We do not have any valuables in the boat, except leaves and creeper plants." Whereupon Lord Satyanaaraayana replied, "Oh Saadhu, so be it." The God then departed in great haste and stood by the seashore.

When Saadhu went into his boat, he discovered to his horror that the boat was filled with leaves and creeper plants, just as he had falsely told the ascetic. Saadhu swooned at the sight but was revived by his son-in-law who spoke, "This must be the curse of the ascetic. He must be a mystic. Let us go to him and ask for his forgiveness." The two merchants went to the seashore where the ascetic was meditating. They fell at his feet and repeatedly begged for his forgiveness.

Pleased by Saadhu's devotion, the Lord said, "Saadhu do not weep. You suffer because you have broken your promise time and again." On hearing this, Saadhu prayed to God, "Oh Lord, even Brahma and other Devaas, drowned in your Maayaa cannot comprehend your various forms completely. How can I, with my limited ability, comprehend your various forms? I pray according to my limited knowledge. Please show me your true form and bless me."

Upon hearing this, God was pleased and granted his wishes, restoring his merchandise in the boat, and disappeared. The two merchants then joyfully sailed homewards. On reaching their hometown they sent a messenger to their wives to inform them about their safe arrival. At that time, Leelaavati and Kalaavati were performing Satyanaaraayana Poojaa. Leelaavati quickly finished the Poojaa and asked her daughter to do so. She then hurried to the seashore to meet her husband. Kalaavati, in her eagerness to meet her husband, forgot to eat the prasad and rushed to the seashore. This action of hers angered Lord Satyanaaraayana. He caused the boat and her husband to drown in the sea.

Not finding her husband, Kalaavati started weeping. All were wonderstruck and frightened. Saadhu was at a loss to know what to do. Thinking it was Lord Satyanaaraayana's Maayaa, he announced to everybody that he would perform Satyanaaraayana Poojaa, and prayed to Lord Satyanaaraayana again and again. At this, Lord Satyanaaraayana, the savior of sinners, was very pleased and said, "Oh Saadhu, your daughter did not eat the prasad in her haste to see her husband, and so I made him and the boat to disappear. Let her go home, and take the prasad, and return." On hearing this, Kalaavati rushed home and ate the prasad. When she returned to the seashore, she found, to her joy, her husband and the boat. Then Saadhu returned home happily with his relatives, performed Satyanaaraayana Poojaa on every full moon day. With God's grace, he enjoyed all the comforts in this world, and finally attained salvation.

Chapter 5

Mahaarishi Soota continued, "Once there was a king called Tungadhwaja who underwent a lot of misery because he refused the Satyanaaraayana prasad.

One day after hunting, he was resting under a tree. Cowherds were happily performing Satyanaaraayana Poojaa nearby. The king, in vanity, refused the prasad they offered. When he reached his palace, he found that his kingdom, all his sons, his wealth and everything had disappeared. Then it occurred to him that Lord Satyanaaraayana was probably angry with him. He went back to the cowherds, prostrated before Lord Satyanaaraayana, and performed the Poojaa with great devotion. The Lord showered his blessings, and the king regained everything he had lost earlier. He lived happily, and reached Vaikuntha after his death."

Mahaarishi Soota said, "Oh holy men, I have narrated to you the Satyanaaraayana Kathaa which was originally told by Lord Vishnu to Naarada Muni. By observing this Vratha, mankind can attain salvation. In this Kaliyuga, observance of the Vratha can lead to gratification of one's wishes."

Thus ended the narration of Mahaarishi Soota, after which Shaunaka and other rishis returned to their respective places.

~~~~~  
~~~~~  
~~~~~